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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

State Department review completed

**Top Secret**

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14 August 1971

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Approved For Release 2004/04/19 : CIA-RDP79T00975A019800010002-0

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Approved For Release 2004/04/19 : CIA-RDP79T00975A019800010002-0

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Approved For Release 2004/04/19 : CIA-RDP79T00975A019800010002-0

USSR-CHINA-BALKANS: The Soviets have launched a vigorous campaign to block Peking's attempts to erode Moscow's influence abroad, and particularly in the Balkans.

Moscow seems especially irate over Romania's recent attempts to exploit its ties with China in order to widen the room Bucharest has for maneuver vis-a-vis the USSR. Currently, the Soviets are exerting considerable pressure against Romania and other recalcitrants who continue to cultivate relations with Peking.

Yesterday a Hungarian newspaper reported that Chinese Premier Chou En-lai planned to visit Tirana, Belgrade, and Bucharest this fall. The article--clearly printed at Soviet behest--warned that if this should result in an "anti-Soviet axis," an "extremely dangerous situation" would be created in the Balkans. There is no official confirmation of the visit by Chou, but it would not be unprecedented and could have been discussed during Ceausescu's trip to China in June.

The linkage of Romania with the two Balkan heretics--Albania and Yugoslavia--is unusual and is indicative of the genuine concern Moscow has about the potential influence of China in this area. The Hungarians are now particularly vulnerable to Soviet manipulation on this issue, since they too are guilty of attempting to improve relations with Peking. A planned visit of Hungarian Premier Fock to Peking was canceled recently after Soviet intervention.

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BERLIN TALKS: Intensive ambassadorial negotiations on Berlin this week have generated new momentum toward an accord, although several contentious issues remain unresolved.

The ambassadors reached tentative agreement on the long-disputed final quadripartite protocol, which would link the text negotiated by the four ambassadors to whatever agreements eventually emerge from talks between the two Germanies. In addition, the gap between the two sides has been narrowed somewhat on the major substantive issues of civilian access to West Berlin, West German representation of West Berlin citizens abroad, and political ties between West Germany and West Berlin.

Several problems still remain, however. Moscow is reluctant to accept as much responsibility for guaranteeing unimpeded access as the Allies wish and the Soviets are still arguing to allow East German spot checks of civilian travelers and sealed shipments to and from Berlin. Neither have the Soviets shown any sign of moderating their opposition to West Berliners traveling in the USSR on West German passports.

On Federal German presence in West Berlin, the Soviets have proposed a new draft provision which would open a way around the impasse. The procedure would include a letter from the Allies to the West German Chancellor defining the extent of Bonn's activity in Berlin. There are unsettled difficulties here too, because the Soviets have so far refused to commit themselves to formal approval of the contents of the Western letter. The ambassadors' inventiveness to date in finding mutually satisfactory wording that does no real violence to either side's legal position offers some hope that even these long-standing issues can be resolved over the next several weeks by imaginative drafting.

Meanwhile, Moscow continues to press for a consulate in West Berlin. At Tuesday's session Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov stated that he could not accept

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a Berlin agreement that did not include a Soviet consulate. The Allied position has been that they would consider a consulate only if satisfactory wording was reached on other sections of the agreement. By discussing these other sections first, the Soviets have so far refrained from provoking a direct confrontation over the consulate.

The next ambassadorial meeting, scheduled for Monday, will provide an important indication of whether this week's forward movement will be maintained.

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